

**White Deer Meadows
Proposed Conservation Easement
Environmental Assessment
Public Comments open August 29th-September 27th**

Hi Julie, I appreciate these updates and would always be all for more public access. As population grows in this these western states I think we should support you guys more than ever in these projects. Thanks

Fern Harmon

(e-mail; 9/4/2018)

My name is Mark Lefens and I live in Bridger Canyon near Bozeman, MT. I fully support the proposed White Deer Meadows conservation easement. This easement will enhance access to Forest Service land in an area that is coming under increasing pressure from development. It will protect critical winter range for ungulates. It will help maintain the Gallatin Valley as the kind of place that everyone; hunters, hikers, and all those who appreciate open spaces, loves.

(e-mail; 8/29/2018)

Julie,

White Deer Meadows would certainly connect and maintain the ecological integrity of the Armstrong and Maher easements. As you described, the 160 acre portion on the foothills of the proposed easement is of critical importance to mule deer wintering between Tom Reese Creek and North Cottonwood Creek. The other included parcels provide an important buffer from human related disturbance as well as the potential for use by deer during the "greenup period" in early spring. You did an excellent job of coordinating the proposed easement and compiling the various documents. I hope this moves forward. Good Luck.

Sincerely,

Dave Pac

(e-mail; 8/29/2018)

Good Morning Julie!

Been a while, hope all is well with you! Once again, I thank you for all your time and efforts on projects such as this as I know the involvement is deep to get such a proposal even out the door.

I am in support, as are the other 6 people in my family household, of this property acquisition. I feel with the growth in this valley, there really is becoming less and less habitat security for the deer. This in turn would provide both winter range for the deer, as well as more public access for hunting. One thing that may not have even been considered, but I do, is the fact that this particular area is home to a significant number of black bears. The number one food source for black bears in the spring, is an easy fawn mule deer (other than grass of course). The more opportunity we can get to hunt some black bears and bring the numbers of those down, the better chance of fawn survival we have. I don't think many people realize how many fawns and calves are taken by bears each year, but I can assure you if this goes through, we will be spending a little time spring bear hunting there!!

Thanks again, and you have our support!

Matt Clyde

(e-mail; 8/29/2018)

Julie,

Thank you for being included in opportunity to comment on the Proposed Easement

Please find the my comments below:

1. From what I read in the Draft is that the land is zoned 1 dwelling per 40 acres. From the Gallatin County website under the Reese Creek Zoning District subject property is shaded green which is classified as: "RW160- Rural Residential and Wildlife Corridor 1 per 160" It appears an oversight took place.
2. The subject property was purchased with the existing zoning already in place. The present owners have vested property rights as outlined in the zoning regulations
3. The zoning clearly states "Conserve and Protect Wildlife" I **don't** think *our* Fish and Game money is well spent for something that is already in place.
4. The zoning in place in my calculations allows for 6 to 8 dwellings not 10, yet does allow for clustering and transferring of development rights.
5. From my reading the regulations cluster development would be required thus preserving open space and agriculture. I **don't** think *our* Fish and Game money is well spent for something that is already in place.
6. From my reading of the Draft EA the basis of the value is hypothetical as it is not subdivided and does not have the vested value which is after a Preliminary Subdivision Plat is approved in my opinion. The value is based on "IF" it is subdividable. It is not subdivided and should only be based on the existing 3 parcels.
7. In my opinion If the value is based on subdivided values the applicant needs to process the application through the Subdivision process and obtain a Preliminary Plat Approval on a Subdivision. This would determine what "subdivideable" and then a true value could be obtained.
8. I don't believe the cost is worth the gain when the land already zoned!
9. Having the wrong zoning classification in an appraisal affects the values. I do not see appraisal included in documents.
10. Implementing the Easement would impact the adjacent landowners from public nuisance to trash!
11. The access road needs to have the "devil in the details" worked out as who is going to permit, maintain, pickup up trash and police. FWP cannot manage what they have now much less put more on their plate!
12. Having upper limits of grazing stipulated is not desirable since vegetation/ soils are marginable at best.
13. There is a value for having a place for wildlife, yet I don't this at this cost.

Best Regards

Tom Henesh (e-mail 8/29/2018)

September 20, 2018



Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Attn: Julie Cunningham
1400 S. 19th Ave
Bozeman, MT 59718

RE: White Deer Meadows Conservation Easement

Dear Ms. Cunningham,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed White Deer Meadows Conservation Easement. Gallatin Valley Land Trust (GVLT) believes that the proposed conservation easement will protect important and highly threatened winter range for mule deer and elk. The proposed conservation easement will also provide hunting opportunities for the general public, and will protect a scenic, open landscape that can be enjoyed by the general public traveling on Rocky Mountain Road. These conservation values align with GVLT's mission to protect open lands and wildlife habitat and GVLT strongly supports the proposed White Deer Meadows conservation easement.

GVLT is a non-profit, conservation organization that works to protect southwest Montana's heritage of working farms and ranches, open landscapes, and wildlife habitat and creates trails to connect people, communities and the land. Since our founding in 1990, GVLT has helped to conserve more than 46,000 acres of land and create over 80 miles of trails in Gallatin Valley and the surrounding communities.

As noted in the EA, GVLT holds a conservation easement on a 400-acre property directly to the north of the proposed White Deer Meadows Conservation Easement and MFWP holds a conservation easement on the property directly to the south. Completing the White Deer Meadows Conservation Easement would fill the gap and create a large block of conserved land. In addition, GVLT holds 4 other conservation easements within 3 miles of the proposed project.

Gallatin County has been the fastest growing County in Montana for the past two decades. The location of the proposed White Deer Meadows Conservation Easement in the West Bridger Mountains is an area that is highly threatened by residential development. If developed, the unique winter range habitat in this area would be fragmented and would negatively impact mule deer and elk.

Opportunities to conserve important wildlife properties such as this one are rare and GVLT encourages MFWP to take advantage of this opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

Penelope Pierce
Executive Director